

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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VICE CHIEF OF STAFF  
UNITED STATES ARMY

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Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, on behalf of the nearly one million Soldiers that comprise our Army – 248,000 of whom are forward-deployed throughout the world – thank you for the opportunity to discuss Army readiness and the need to improve the strategic depth of our force.

We are in a dangerous, uncertain, and unpredictable time. As we execute missions worldwide and increase our commitment in the war on terror, we face challenges continuing to provide forces that exceed the level of demand envisioned in the recent quadrennial defense review.

We have received considerable support from this Committee and the Congress to increase the readiness of our Army. As a result, the Soldiers we have deployed are the best trained, best equipped, and best led we have ever sent into combat. Our immediate challenge lies not in the readiness of these deployed forces, but in the readiness of our non-deployed forces.

Recent decisions by the President and the Secretary of Defense to grow our ground forces and to assure access to all components of our force set us on an improved path to meet the high levels of strategic demand for Army forces.

We are growing six new brigade combat teams (BCTs) in the active force and the associated enabling organizations in all our components. This will expand our rotational pool to 76 BCTs and more than 225 support organizations in the operational force of the Total Army. Our goal is to provide a continuous supply of 20-21 BCTs to meet global commitments.

Recent changes in reserve component mobilization policies announced by Secretary Gates provide the necessary access to our reserve components that comprise 55 percent of the Army's capabilities. These new policies will help spread the load more equitably across all components of the Army and provide more predictability for Soldiers, families, and employers. These policies will also

allow us to manage resources more efficiently to ensure that we deploy fully manned, trained, equipped, cohesive units, prepared for the challenges they will face.

We are working rapidly to implement these decisions which are essential to meeting the unprecedented demand on the Army. However, to sustain the readiness of our deployed forces and to begin restoring the strategic depth of our Army, we require Congressional support in five key areas.

First, recent decisions to expand the Army reflect the clear recognition of the dangers we face and the strain that five years of sustained demand has placed on our All-Volunteer force. This will require a national commitment to sustain predictable resourcing over time and to build our force in a balanced, coordinated fashion, while providing adequately for the needs of our All-Volunteer Soldiers and their families.

Second, with the support of this Committee and the Congress, we have been provided the resources needed to restore battle losses and repair worn equipment through an aggressive reset program. We are well ahead of schedule in executing these funds in fiscal year 2007. In the first five months, we have already obligated more than \$12.5 billion of the \$17.1 billion appropriated. As General Schoomaker recently testified, we anticipate that our fiscal year 2008 reset requirements will be approximately \$13.5 billion – a figure that will increase as we plus up forces in current theaters of operation and increase the size of our Army.

Because the replacement of equipment can take up to three years following the commitment of funds, we seek to make this funding available for use as soon as possible. To overcome the unprecedented stress being placed on our equipment today, we will require reset funding for a minimum of two to three years beyond the duration of the current conflict.

Third, we need significant, sustained investment to both overcome equipment shortfalls and modernize. With Congress' help, we have made great progress increasing Soldier and unit effectiveness. However, we still have more

work to do to overcome the tremendous equipment shortages with which we entered this war and to ensure our Soldiers are armed with the most advanced technologies and equipment.

Historically we have entered conflicts flatfooted and this current conflict is no exception. In 2001, investment accounts were under funded by approximately \$100 billion during the previous decade, resulting in nearly \$56 billion in equipment shortages across the Army. To meet Combatant Commanders' immediate wartime needs, we pooled equipment from across the force to equip Soldiers deploying into harm's way. This practice, which we are continuing today, increases risk for our next-to-deploy units, and limits our ability to respond to emerging strategic contingencies.

There are no front lines in today's battle space, therefore we can no longer accept risk in how we equip our combat support and combat service support units. The changed conditions of warfare necessitate that we equip *all* units with force protection, night vision goggles, crew served weapons, radios, and other critical items. Your continued support is needed to fix what we call "holes in the force" and equip all our units - Active, Guard, and Reserve – to their authorized levels. We ask you to increase your support for this effort as we work to break the historical cycle of unpreparedness.

We face adversaries who are quickly adapting their methods, tactics, and tools of warfare. We must remain committed to investing in technologies and equipment that enable our most important asset – the Soldier – to remain ahead of our enemies. Investing sufficiently in our future readiness is a strategic necessity and must be viewed as a matter of priority, not just affordability.

Fourth, our ability to grow the force to meet rotational requirements is jeopardized by the \$2 billion reduction in our Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) account in the fiscal year 2007. We appreciate Congress' funding of military construction to requested levels in the continuing resolution. Just as critical, however, is the full and timely funding of BRAC, which is an essential and inextricable part of our operationally synchronized stationing plan. Continued delays or reductions in funding BRAC limits our ability to grow the force, improve

readiness, meet our global commitments while fighting the long war, and deliver quality of life improvements which our Soldiers and families both need and deserve.

Both General Schoomaker and I have expressed these concerns in numerous forums. In November of last year, General Schoomaker co-authored a “16 star” letter with the other service chiefs, and testified numerous times to the significant impact of this delay. It is imperative to fund these requirements without delay, especially while we are at war. To properly house, train, and prepare our Soldiers, we urge the Congress, at the very first opportunity, to restore full BRAC funding to levels requested in the 2007 President’s Budget, and to fully fund BRAC and military construction for 2008 and in the future.

Fifth, we will require access to supplemental funding for fiscal year 2007 by April, to properly sustain the Army. In June of last year, we really had to “slam the brakes” on expenditures when supplemental appropriations were not provided when expected. That timing, in combination with the reductions in the fiscal year 2006 budget request, forced us to institute a civilian hiring freeze; terminate temporary employees; tightly control travel expenses; and delay information technology purchases. It was a painful, and avoidable, exercise. We cannot repeat last year’s near disastrous “cash flow” experience and meet the increased operational demands now facing us.

Finally, we must fully resource the Army to enable it to simultaneously grow, transform, and modernize while effectively fighting the long war. The Army remains committed to providing the best land force possible to support the Nation’s worldwide interests. The fiscal year 2008 President’s Budget, combined with anticipated GWOT funding, sets the Army on the right path to achieving these objectives, and I ask you to fully fund these critical requirements.

The fundamental challenge impacting Army readiness and strategic depth is the need to establish a proper balance between strategy and resources. Had we funded the Army to requested levels in recent years and endorsed policies to assure access to all of our capability, we would be in a better strategic posture today. We are greatly encouraged by the recent actions of the Congress, the

President, and the Secretary of Defense which reflect clear recognition of the compelling need to rectify our current situation.

I look forward to working with Congress to increase the readiness and strategic depth of our Army. Together we must ensure our Soldiers have the resources necessary to prevail against our enemies. We must also guarantee a quality of life for our Soldiers and their families that is equal to the quality of their service. The young men and women who have raised their right hands and have said, "America, in your time of need, send me, I'll defend you," deserve nothing less.